

THE NEW YEAR

He was the one man I met up in the woods
That stormy New Year's morning ; and at first sight,
Fifty yards off , I could not tell how much
Of the strange tripod was a man . His body ,
Bowed horizontal , was supported equally
By legs at one end , by a rake at the other :
Thus he rested , far less like a man than
His wheel-barrow in profile was like a pig .
But when I saw it was an old man bent ,
At the same moment came into my mind
The games at which boys bend thus , High-cockolorum ,
Or Fly-the-garter , and Leap-frog . At the sound
Of footsteps he began to straighten himself ;
His head rolled under his cape like a tortoise's ;
He took an unlit pipe out of his mouth
Politely ere I wished him "A Happy New Year " ,
And with his head cast upwards sideways muttered -
So far as I could hear through the trees' roar -
"Happy New year , and fastish , too , I hope " .
While I strode by and he turned to ~~his~~ raking leaves .